

Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman
Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce
Markup on H.R. 3548, H.R. 4080, H.R. 1281, H.R. 1528
Subcommittee on Health
February 27, 2014

Mr. Chairman, thank you for convening this afternoon's markup. These bipartisan public health bills address a range of issues—from screening newborns to detect and quickly treat serious conditions to strengthening our nation's trauma and emergency medical services capabilities.

H.R. 3548, the Improving Trauma Care Act, expands the current trauma detention for the purposes of trauma care grants to include burns and other injuries resulting from electrical, chemical, or other exposures.

H.R. 4080, the Trauma Systems and Regionalization of Emergency Care Reauthorization Act, reauthorizes four grant programs that seek to improve access to trauma care services within states and in rural areas. Trauma injuries are a leading cause of death. And they are a significant driver of health care costs. That's why effective and efficient delivery of trauma care and emergency medical services is such an important goal.

Unfortunately, we've had difficulty securing funding for the programs that are reauthorized in H.R. 4080. As this legislation moves through Committee, I look forward to continuing our discussions about the value of these programs and how we might get them funded.

H.R. 1281, the Newborn Screening Saves Lives Act, extends newborn screening services and related activities for conditions like sickle cell anemia that are not otherwise apparent at birth and, if left untreated, can cause severe disability or even death. At the end of last year, we agreed that staff on both sides of the aisle would continue working on this legislation. I'm pleased that we now have an agreement on this bill. The Senate has already acted to reauthorize the newborn screening program, and the legislation before us builds upon the Senate's efforts.

H.R. 1528, the Veterinary Medicine Mobility Act, amends the Controlled Substances Act to clarify that registered veterinarians may transport and dispense controlled substances in the usual course of veterinary practice at sites other than their registered principal place of business, including into any state in which they are licensed. This is particularly important for veterinarians who work with large animals or in rural areas.

I want to recognize Energy and Commerce members Congressman Johnson, Congressman Green, and Congressman Burgess for their leadership on H.R. 3548 and H.R. 4080. I'd also like to acknowledge the sponsors of H.R. 1281 and H.R. 1528—Congresswoman Roybal-Allard and Congressman Schrader.

Mr. Chairman, there are a number of additional measures of interest to Democratic and Republican members. I hope we will soon have an opportunity to continue bipartisan work on public health legislation in the Subcommittee.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you and staff for the work done on these bills. I support the four measures and urge my colleagues to do the same.